

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

April 28, 2014

The Honorable Deval Patrick Office of the Governor State House, Room 360 Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Patrick:

I am writing in response to Massachusetts' request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project, including revisions to the project period to implement a portion of its plan. Between January 24, 2014 and April 28, 2014, the State submitted documentation to and held conversations with the U.S. Department of Education (Department) to support amendment requests to its approved Race to the Top plan. As you are aware, the Department has the authority to approve amendments to your plan and budget, provided the revisions do not change the overall scope and objectives of the approved proposal. In March 2013, the Department issued "Amendment Requests with No-cost Extension Guidance and Principles" indicating the process by which amendments containing requests to provide additional time for a grantee to accomplish the reform goals and deliverables it committed to in its Race to the Top application and approved Scope of Work would be reviewed and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Department has applied the conditions and elements specific to no-cost extensions noted in the document, and compared it with the Race to the Top program *Principles* included in the "Grant Amendment Submission Process" document issued to Governors of grantee States in October 2011.

I approve the following amendments, including an extension to the time period for implementation of several sub-projects, as described below.

• In Federal Project 10, Sub-project D4.A4 (Preparation Program Effectiveness Grants), shift a total of \$1,700,137 from Years 3 and 4 contractual to Year 5 to provide additional time for programs awarded teacher and principal preparation program expansion funds to implement their plans. Based on initial delays in making the awards, Years 3 and 4 spending of award funds was lower than expected and awardees need additional time to carry out their plans.

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- In Federal Project 11, Sub-project D5.A2 (Create a Professional Development System for Educators), shift \$1,076,056 from Year 3 to Years 4 and 5 to support personnel-related costs and ongoing development and implementation of the State's professional development system. Year 3 funds are available due to ongoing delays in the development and dissemination of professional development tools and resources. During the no-cost extension period, Massachusetts will: 1) provide communications and technical assistance to LEAs statewide around the use of the Professional Development Planning Guide and Professional Development Evaluation Toolkit (expected to be completed in Year 4); 2) meet its Scope of Work commitment to develop guidelines as well as an application and monitoring process for vetting preferred professional development providers; and 3) continue to fund District and School Assistance Centers mathematics and literacy specialists who provide professional development and support to LEAs and schools statewide in the transition to new standards.
- In Federal Project 9, Sub-project D3.K (Ensure Equitable Distribution of Effective Teachers and Principals UTeach), shift \$549,059 from Year 3 to Years 4 and 5 to continue UTeach program implementation at UMass Lowell. Year 3 funds are available due to start-up and implementation of the UTeach program occurring later than anticipated. As a result, UMass Lowell will not be able to offer three courses required for the program until SY 2014-2015.
- In Federal Project 4, Sub-project B3.C1, shift \$150,000 in available Years 3 and 4 funds to Year 5 to support continued educator participation in pre-AP training. In Year 4, the State had to identify a new vendor to provide pre-AP training due to a contracting issue, which resulted in some LEAs not being able to provide training to educators as planned. A no-cost extension in this project will allow participating LEAs to continue to provide pre-AP training to educators in SY 2014-2015.
 - O Additionally, Massachusetts will shift \$390,004 in available Years 3 and 4 funds to support other Race to the Top projects.¹ According to the State, it has already exceeded its goals for the number of teachers receiving pre-AP training, and these funds are no longer needed in this project budget.

In Federal Project 3 (Create a Unified Pre-K–12 Teaching and Learning System), Massachusetts is approved to use available Year 3 funds in Year 4 and a no-cost extension period up to June 30, 2015 to continue the development of resources for inclusion in the Edwin Teaching and Learning system and to support LEA use of the system, as described below.

• In Sub-project B3.A1 (Model Curriculum Maps and Units), shift a total of \$2,251,213 from Year 3 to Years 4 and 5 to allow for: 1) the acquisition of copyrights for materials the State has integrated into its model curriculum units; 2) ongoing model curriculum unit development and refinement; and 3) ongoing training and technical assistance to LEAs statewide on utilizing and adapting

model curriculum units and maps. Funds were unexpended in Year 3 due to contractual costs coming in lower than expected and because the State decided to wait to obtain copyrights for materials included in its model curriculum units until revisions were made to the units based on feedback from educators.

- In Sub-project B3.A2 (Digital Library), shift a total of \$364,061 from Year 3 contractual to Years 4 and 5 to allow for ongoing production of videos documenting the development of model curriculum units and demonstrating curriculum shifts associated with implementation of the Common Core State Standards-aligned Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Year 3 funds are available due to development of videos for inclusion in the digital library taking longer than expected.
- In Sub-project B3.A3 (Interim and Formative Assessment System), shift a total of \$849,386 from Year 3 to Years 4 and 5 to allow for enhancement of the assessment content available in the Edwin Teaching and Learning system. Year 3 funds are available because the cost of acquiring copyrights to include historical Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System assessments in Edwin Teaching and Learning was lower than expected.
 - o In Years 4 and 5, Massachusetts will: 1) continue selection and tagging of items for inclusion in the interim and formative assessment item banks; 2) vet locally developed items and assessments for inclusion in the system; and 3) refine guidance documents regarding the use of the online interim and formative assessment system.
 - Massachusetts is also approved to shift a total of \$345,179 in available
 Year 3 funds to support Sub-project B3.A4, as described below, and other
 Race to the Top projects.ⁱⁱ
- In Sub-project B3.A4, shift a total of \$330,622 from Year 3 to Years 4 and 5 to support ongoing development of Massachusetts Performance Assessments of Knowledge and Skills (MPAKS) and to allow for MPAKS pilots to occur in fall and winter of SY 2014-2015 rather than spring 2014 as initially planned. Of the total funds shifted, \$164,439 is from this sub-project and \$166,183 is from sub-project B3.A3, described above.

As noted in the May 24, 2013 amendment approval letter, amendment approval related to MPAKS is conditioned upon the State not using Race to the Top grant funds to design, develop, or pilot MPAKS for eventual summative purposes in grades and subjects that are part of the State's ESEA accountability plan. As noted in the Notice Inviting Applications and the Notice of Final Priorities under "Statewide Summative Assessments," no funds awarded under the Race to the Top competition may be used to pay for costs related to statewide summative assessments (e.g., the State assessments required under the ESEA). Based on these requirements, Race to the Top funds may not be used to develop or pilot MPAKS in the following subject areas and grades:

- o English language arts and mathematics grades 3 through 8 and 10
- o Science and technology/engineering grades 5, 8, and 10

If Race to the Top funds have been or are used in the development of MPAKS, the State must demonstrate how MPAKS developed for subject areas and grades where MCAS assessments are administered are paid for through State or other funds.

- In Sub-project B3.A IT (Create and Deploy a Teaching and Learning System IT), shift a total of \$493,378 from Year 3 to Years 4 and 5 to support ongoing onboarding and technical assistance and to cover subscription costs for districts implementing Edwin Teaching and Learning. Year 3 funds were available due to subscription costs coming in lower than expected, as fewer districts participated in the SY 2012-2013 pilot than initially anticipated.
 - O Additionally, the State reports that it has sufficient funds to support onboarding and subscription costs for Race to the Top participating LEAs that are implementing Edwin Teaching and Learning as well as LEAs that are not participating in Race to the Top. Massachusetts would like to fund onboarding and subscription costs for these LEAs as well, as it believes that doing so will help to promote statewide use of the system after the Race to the Top grant period.

As described in a September 17, 2013, amendment approval letter, the Department indicated that it generally approves the State's process to review LEA subgrant requests to obligate and liquidate funds after September 23, 2014. Prior to June 30, 2014, the Department expects the State to submit a record of each participating LEA project approved by the State for a no-cost extension and the total funding approved for the LEAs' Year 5 Scopes of Work.

It is our understanding that this amendment and no-cost extension will not result in a change in your State's performance measures and outcomes, nor will they substantially change the scope and objectives of the work. Please note that we are expecting grantees with no-cost extensions to liquidate all funds by September 1, 2015, given that by law all Race to the Top funds revert to the U.S. Department of Treasury as of October 1, 2015. The State must request and receive approval to move forward with no-cost extensions for any additional projects. This letter will be posted on the Department's website as a record of the amendment.

If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please do not hesitate to contact Massachusetts' Race to the Top Program Officer, Ashlee Davis, at 202-401-9501 or Ashlee.Davis@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

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Ann Whalen Director, Policy and Program Implementation Implementation and Support Unit

cc: Commissioner Mitchell Chester Carrie Conaway Helene Bettencourt Saeyun Lee

¹ It is the Department's understanding that the State will submit additional amendment(s) to propose use(s) for this funding.

ⁱⁱ The State will shift \$166,183 to Sub-project B3.A4, and it is the Department's understanding that the State will submit additional amendment(s) to propose use(s) for the remaining \$178,996 of this total.